THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

Vol. XLV—No. 2 **December, 1956**

INFERIOR, semi intelligent and non-intelligent Elementals—are all future *men. That fact alone—that a Spirit is endowed with intelligence—is a proof to the Occultist that* man *acquired his knowledge and intelligence throughout the human cycle. There is but one indivisible and absolute Omniscience and Intelligence in the Universe, and this thrills throughout every atom and infinitesimal point of the whole Kosmos which hath no bounds, and which people call Space, considered independently of anything contained in it. This may be a mystery, yet it is a fact, in Esoteric philosophy, and a very apparent one too.*

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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Truth is the name we give to the highest and deepest insights.
—WELLER EMBLER

THEOSOPHY

Vol. XLV December, 1956 No. 2

A NATURAL DISCLOSURE

AMONG the portents of a cycle of both inner and outer significance—a cycle like that of Christmas and the New Year—is the presence of a sense of completion. Something is ending and something is beginning, and in that brief interval the reflective individual may experience the likeness of eternity. Time never does stand still, of course, but its hold may seem to loosen somewhat at the junction-point of cycles. The value in this often is in a cessation of longing.

It is natural enough for human beings to long for one sort of fulfillment or another. It is natural, but it is not philosophical. But it is natural, also, that each cycle of human experience should contain a moment which presents the similitude of freedom from longing. If a man cannot take time out from his straining after goals, he suffers from a serious delusion as to his own nature. For man is more than his ambitions and his strivings. He is more, even, than his aspirations, for he is a being who, even in the midst of his struggles, should be able to make his peace with life.

If he can know no peace in such intervals, he can hardly respect his life or any other. The sense of fitness in the present is evidence of the feeling that life is good and just. To be dissatisfied with "now" is to act as though nothing good has happened in the past, since it led to a present from which one wishes to escape. Even if we intellectually acknowledge all that is to be the outcome of "law," there is only a nominal honoring of this principle so long as the restive soul looks anxiously to the future. That only the future can engage his attention is sad evidence of his egocentric predicament, for what of all those

others who have lived happily and wisely in both past and present? For *whom* is all this anxiety felt?

Ah! we say, it is for the benefit of mankind that I wrestle with my circumstances, my weakness and inadequacies. But when did impatience and an anxious heart help anyone? Tantalus and Sisyphus are the types of those who find discontent in the present, whose feelings stretch out toward distant goals. "Look inward, thou art Buddha," has no meaning for the ones who must get to a place far from where they are, in order to be "worthy."

Self-knowledge, we say, is the goal. But the self strives after nothing. So a "striving" after self-knowledge is practically a contradiction in terms. Even if paradoxes of this sort affront our righteous resolves, our delight in being impetuous and filled with ardor, they hold a lesson which mildly reproaches all those who long for personal achievement. By a circuitous logic, we reach the forlorn conclusion that there can be no *personal* achievement. But what a relief it can be to accept the freedom which lies in letting the idea of personal status go!

Such a mood has invitation from the cycle of Christmas. It is a time when "achievement" is seen as part of an impersonal process. Nature, as the *Gita* says, does all the achieving. The self is but the witness. The self has nothing to achieve, for it is all, to begin with.

Who can have private distinction, when fulfillment is a *world* process? When Nature unfurls her beauty—a beauty wholly without pride or vanity—in every season of the year? What can we, one among myriads of strivers for perfection, add to all this? It is enough to be a part of life. It is enough to feel, in ultimate moments of the cycle, that countless hearts have shared in the community of growth and awakening to that common life.

The birth of a Christ marks a climactic moment of awakening. It is an instant when there is an opening of eyes, and the eyes are filled with a scene of wonder. How could anyone hope, long, or be regretful for anything, in such a moment? And every birth of vision, every opening of the eyes, is a type of every other birth and opening to sight. It is glorious because it is the heritage of all conscious life, because it need be denied to no one.

So there is peace at Christmas time. Wherever one is, whatever his past or prospects, there is both promise and fulfillment in Christmas. This, at least, the soul knows, and so there comes a calm and an acceptance during these days of the cycle.

We are hard to persuade that we are potential Christs, potential Buddhas. We want a push from behind and a pat on the back. We want everything that Christs and Buddhas never want, and which in their understanding and compassion, will never give. How can we learn that our sins are not ourselves, that the tenacity of weakness lies in the *idea* of weakness, and not in any deep cleft of character? Self-knowledge begins with self-respect, and self-respect begins in self-forgetfulness, in not *caring* whether we become wise, great, good, or even Christ-like. If Nature and the Law take no account of our longings to reach to spiritual heights, why should we attach such great importance to them? Too much of life is lived to the accompaniment of an endless fugue of self-defeat, and the resulting pain, as though it *mattered* who suffers self-defeat!

The personal man cannot be defeated on his own battlefield of longing and spiritual ambition. The personal man can only be outwitted by exposing himself as the incurable partisan of his own interests. If he can't be a great teacher, he can always claim attention as a great sinner. He must be revealed as the *poseur* that he is. He does not love virtue, he loves only the dream of his uniqueness, and this delusion he struggles to preserve as though it were his very identity, which, of course, it is.

The Christs and the Buddhas are simply natural men. What they do is the result of the natural motives of life, once these are freed of delusion. The moral splendor that we find in their lives is a reading the personality makes of them; it can hardly be *their* idea of what they are about. All that fuss and exclamation over what is natural!

But to be natural is no easy thing.

Intimations of Destiny

The soul has need of pauses of repose—intervals of escape, not only from the flesh, but even from the mind. A man of the loftiest intellect will experience times when mere intellect not only fatigues him, but amidst its most original conceptions, amidst its proudest triumphs, has a something trite and commonplace compared with one of those vague intimations of a spiritual destiny which are not within the ordinary domain of reason. The soul has a long road to travel—from time through eternity. It demands its halting hours of contemplation.

—Bulwer-Lytton

QUALIFICATIONS FOR CHELASHIP

[This article, written by Mohini M. Chatterjee, also co-author of "Man—Fragments of Forgotten History," which Madame Blavatsky called "a mystical little romance," was first read before the London Lodge, and printed in the *Theosophist* for September, 1884. Chatterjee was one of the accomplished writers and speakers of the time, of whom H.P.B. was very fond. The article, reprinted in THEOSOPHY for the first time, is of especial interest in that it defines more fully the "six glorious virtues" as presented by Robert Crosbie in *The Friendly Philosopher,* pages 81-2.—Editors.]

THE power of the Adepts over forces of nature, not generally recognised, has been enlarged upon on various occasions, but no account of them can possibly be satisfactory without bringing into prominence their goodness and their solicitude for the welfare of the race, which an ordinary man can no more comprehend than the Polynesian savage measure the intellectual height of a Newton or a Galileo.

Surprise is often expressed that the philanthropy of the Mahatmas does not induce them to abandon their seclusion and work for men, among men. But the reason for such apparently strange conduct on the part of these god-like men is not very far to seek. The productive power of our energies varies in accordance with the plane on which they operate. A bricklayer labouring from sunrise to sunset produces work which, when estimated in money, will be found to be but a small fraction of the money-value of an hour's work by a man of science. The difference in the effects generated by a given quantity of energy on the physical and intellectual planes is thus apparent. Those who are acquainted with the laws of spiritual dynamics know that the work produced by a given amount of energy on the intellectual plane is in its turn immeasurably less than that produced by the same quantity of energy acting on the plane of spirit—the highest principle in man, according to the occult doctrine. It is more unreasonable, therefore, to expect an Adept to work with us on the ordinary plane than it would be to suggest to Sir William Thompson to turn shoemaker.

The value of a scientific discovery as an intellectual triumph can be best estimated by a proper study of the various steps which have led up to it. Similarly, the excellence achieved by an Adept can only be appre-

ciated, though in a very rough and incomplete manner no doubt, by a careful consideration of his preliminary training.

According to the most authoritative treatises on that occult science of which the Adept is a master, verified by the experience of its living students, none are admitted into the inner sanctuary for instruction until they reach a certain stage of spiritual development, characterised by the attainment of what, in the Brahmanical books, are called the four "sadhanas" or accomplishments.

The first "accomplishment," which a neophyte must have, is the right knowledge of the real and the unreal. The object to be attained by the help of the "Great Science," as it is called, being realisation of the true, and Adeptship being but the mark of a certain stage of this realisation, it is clear that the first step to be taken is to gain an intellectual apprehension of what the truth is. But what is the truth? It will not do for the neophyte to ask the question like the jesting proconsul, and refuse to wait for the answer. Had Pilate asked the question in Sanskrit he might have been answered out of his own mouth. For the Sanskrit word itself offers a clue to the nature of truth. In that language truth and reality bear the same name, and reality is defined to be that which is unaffected by time, or, in the quaint phraseology of the original, remains witness of the three divisions of time—the past, the present, and the future. The first accomplishment, therefore, consists in an intimate intellectual conviction of the fact that all and everything which appears to have an existence separate from Parabrahm is merely illusion (Maya). Hence, it is clear that at the present stage of the theosophical movement the duty that lies upon the Society and all its members is to disseminate the knowledge of the Esoteric Doctrine, the true philosophy of the real and the unreal, as that alone is capable of laying the foundation of any progress whatsoever.

The second accomplishment marks the next step on the path, and is the permanent effect produced on the mind by the theoretical knowledge, which forms the preceding accomplishment. When the neophyte has once grasped the unreal character of the objects around him, he ceases to crave for them, and is thus prepared to acquire the second accomplishment, which is a perfect indifference to the enjoyment of the fruit of one's actions, both here and hereafter.

Exoteric students fall into a grievous error by their failure to catch the true spirit of the injunction against acting under the impulse of desire. They erroneously suppose that the best preparation for spiritual

life is to forcibly repress all outward expression of desire, entirely losing sight of the fact that even the most rigid abstinence from physical acts does not produce inactivity on the higher planes of spiritual or mental existence. Sankaracharya, in his commentaries on the Bhagavat Gita, one of the most authoritative of the Brahminical sacred writings, says that such a conclusion is simply delusive. A hasty supposition might here be made that these considerations will have the effect of sanctioning persistence in evil, but when the desire for improvement is constantly present in the mind, and the character of the evil thoroughly realised, each failure to harmonise the inward with the outward nature will, by the revulsion of feeling thus produced, strengthen the determination to such an extent that the evil desire will be speedily crushed. This is why Eliphas Levi so vehemently denounces the institution of forced celibacy among the Romish priests.

The personality of a man at any one moment is the result of all his previous acts, thoughts, and emotions, the energy of which constantly inclines the mind to act in a particular way. All attempts, therefore, to cure this mental bias by repressing its expression on the outer plane is as hurtful as to throw back into the circulation unhealthy blood, seeking a natural outlet. The internal desire is always forging fresh links in the chain of material existence, even though denied outward manifestation. The only way to free oneself from the bonds of Karma, producing birth and death, is to let the stored-up energy exhaust itself merely as a portion of the great cosmic energy, and not to colour it with personality by referring it to self.

The Bhagavat Gita itself speaks on this subject with no uncertain sound. The great teacher Krishna reproves his pupil Arjuna for having expressed a disinclination to perform the duties pertaining to his sphere of life. The reason is perfectly plain: in reference to the great reality everything of this world is unreal; therefore, to renounce the duties entailed upon us by our birth for something equally unreal only accentuates the ignorance which makes the unreal appear as the real. The wisest course, suggested by Krishna, is that Arjuna should perform all his duties unselfishly. "Thy right is only to the act," says the teacher, "it ends with the performance of the act and never extends to the result." We must perform our duty for its own sake and never allow the mind to dwell on the fruit of our actions, either with pleasure or with pain. Purified from the taint of selfishness, the act passes by like water over the lotus-leaf, without wetting it. But if the act is done as

a means to the attainment of a personal end, the mind acquires a tendency to repeat the act, and thus necessitates further incarnations to exhaust that tendency.

From the above considerations it is abundantly clear that occultism enjoins upon its votaries the necessity of an ardent and sleepless desire for the performance of duty, the sphere of which is enlarged by the first accomplishment, which requires a thorough recognition of the unity of the individual with the all. It is not enough to have a sentimental perception of this great truth, but it must be realised in every act of life. The student, therefore, to begin with, must do everything in his power to benefit all on the ordinary physical plane, transferring his activity, however, to the higher intellectual and spiritual planes as his development proceeds.

This leads us to the consideration of the third accomplishment, which is the acquisition of the "six qualifications," in the order they are treated of here. The first of them is called in Sanskrit "Sama"; it consists in obtaining perfect mastery over the mind (the seat of emotions and desires), and in forcing it to act in subordination to the intellect, which has already been purified and strengthened in attaining the two degrees of development already dwelt upon. This done, the mind is thoroughly cleansed of all evil and foolish desires.

The injunction to chasten our minds before purifying our acts might at first sight appear strange, but the practical utility of the course laid down will be obvious on reflection. We have already seen how varying effects are produced by a fixed amount of energy, according to the plane on which it is expended, and certainly the plane of the mind is superior to the plane of our senses. In the next place, forced abstinence from physical evil goes but very little way towards the evolution of that energy which alone can give us the power of approaching the truth. Our thoughts, governed under ordinary circumstances by the law of association, make us contemplate incidents in our past life and thus produce as much disturbance and draw as much on our mental energy as if we had repeated the acts in question many times over. "Sama" then is really the breaking-up of the law of the association of ideas, which enslaves our imagination; when our imagination is purified, the chief difficulty is removed.

The next qualification, the complete mastery over our bodily acts ("Dama" in Sanskrit) follows, as a necessary consequence, from the one already discussed, and does not require much explanation.

The third qualification, known by the Brahmins as "Uparati," is the renunciation of all formal religion and the power of contemplating objects without being in the least disturbed in the performance of the great task one has set before oneself. What is here expected of the aspirant for spiritual knowledge is that he should not allow his sympathies and usefulness to be narrowed by the domination of any particular ecclesiastical system, and that his renunciation of worldly objects should not proceed merely from an incapacity to appreciate their value. When this state is reached, danger from temptation is removed. They alone, the Hindu poet says, are possessed of true fortitude, who preserve the equanimity of their minds in the presence of temptation.

Fourth in order comes the cessation of desire and a constant readiness to part with every thing in the world (Titiksha). The typical illustration of this, given in our mystical literature, is the absence of resentment of wrong. When this qualification is completely attained, there arises in the mind a perennial spring of cheerfulness, washing away every trace of solicitude and care.

Then is acquired the qualification called Samadhana, which renders the student constitutionally incapable of deviating from the right path. In one sense this qualification is the complement of the third as given above. First, all egotistical motives, tempting the man to travel out of his chosen path, lose their hold over him, and finally he perfects himself to such an extent that, at the call of duty, he can unhesitatingly engage in any worldly occupation with the certainty of returning to his habitual life after completing his self-imposed task.

One other qualification is necessary to crown the neophyte's work, and that is an implicit confidence in his master's power to teach and his own to learn (Sraddha). The importance of this qualification is liable to be misunderstood. An unswerving confidence in the master is not required as a means to build up a system of priestcraft, but for an entirely different reason. It will perhaps be readily granted that the capacity for receiving truth is not the same in every mind. There exists a saturation-point for truth in the human mind, as there is one for aqueous vapour in the atmosphere. When that point is reached in any mind, fresh truth becomes to it undistinguishable from falsehood. Truth must by slow degrees grow in our minds, and a strict injunction is laid down in the Bhagavat Gita against "unsettling the faith of the multitude" by a too sudden revelation of esoteric knowledge. At the same time it must be remembered that no man can be expected to seek after

a thing, the reality of which is improbable; the dream-land of an opium-eater will never be a subject of exploration to any one else. The truth perceived by the higher faculties of the Adepts cannot be proved to one who has not developed those faculties, otherwise than by showing its consistency with known truths and by the assertion of those who claim to know. The sanction of a competent authority is a sufficient guarantee that the investigation will not be fruitless. But to accept any authority as final, and to dispense with the necessity of independent investigation is destructive of all progress. Nothing, in fact, should be taken upon blind, unquestioning faith. Indeed, the Eastern sages go so far as to say that to rely solely on the authority of even the Scriptures is sinful. The wisdom of the course actually followed is almost self-evident. Reason is the immediate perception of the fact that the eternal alone is true, and reasoning is the attempt to trace the existence of a thing all through the scale of time; the longer the period over which this operation extends the more complete and satisfactory is the reasoning considered to be. But the moment any fact of knowledge is realised on the plane of eternity, reason becomes changed into consciousness—the son is merged in the father, as the Christian mystic would say. Why then, it may be asked, should confidence in the teaching of the master be a requisite qualification at all? The reply lies on the surface. No one takes the trouble to inquire about what he does not believe to be true. Such confidence in no way demands surrender of reason. The second part of this qualification, the confidence in one's own power to learn, is an indispensable basis of all endeavours to progress. The poet uttered a deeper truth than he was aware of, when he sang:

> Yes, self-abasement leads the way
> To villain bonds and despot's sway.

The moment a man thoroughly believes himself incapable of realising the highest ideal he can conceive of, he becomes so; the conviction of weakness, that apparently supports him, really robs him of his strength: none aspire for what they consider absolutely beyond their reach. Occultism teaches us that infinite perfection is the heritage of man. He must not blaspheme against his innermost divine self, the Augoeides of the Greeks and the Atma of the Brahmins, by self abasement, for that would be the unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost. Christian doctors have tried in vain to identify this particular

sin, the deadliest of all; its true significance lies far beyond the narrow horizon of their theology.

The last accomplishment required is an intense desire for liberation from continued existence and for transformation into the One Life (mumukshatva). It may be thought at first sight that this qualification is a mere redundancy, being practically involved in the second. But such a supposition would be as erroneous as to conceive Nirvana as the annihilation of all life. The second accomplishment is absence of desire for life as a means of selfish enjoyment; while the fourth is a positive and intense desire for a kind of life of which none but those, who have attained the first three accomplishments, can form any adequate conception. All that need here be stated is, that the neophyte is expected to know the real nature of his Ego and to have a fixed determination to retain that knowledge permanently and thus get rid of the body, created by allowing the notion of "I" to fasten itself upon an illusory object.

We shall now pass to the consideration of the minimum amount of these accomplishments indispensable to a successful study of occultism. If the desire for liberation, which constitutes the last accomplishment, is only moderately strong, but the second, indifference to the fruits of one's action, is fully developed and the six qualifications well marked, success is attained by the help of the Master, who moulds the future incarnations of the pupil and smooths his path to Adeptship. But if all the accomplishments are equally strong, Adeptship is reached by the pupil in the same incarnation. Without the second and fourth accomplishments, however, the six qualifications "water but the desert." In recent Theosophical publications two classes of the Mahatma's pupils are mentioned—accepted and probationary pupils (chelas). The first class consists of those who have acquired the four accomplishments up to a certain point and are being practically trained for Adeptship in this life; to the other class belong such pupils as are qualifying themselves, under the guidance of their Masters, for acceptance.

A few words may here be said regarding those who study occultism without any intention of aspiring for regular chelaship. It is evident that by theoretical study of the Esoteric Doctrine the first of the four accomplishments can be achieved; the effect of this in regulating a person's next incarnation cannot be overestimated. The spiritual energy thus generated will cause him to be born under conditions favourable

to the acquirement of the other qualifications and to spiritual progress in general.

One of the greatest of India's occult teachers says on this point that a theoretical study of the philosophy, though unaccompanied by the requisite accomplishments, produces more merit than the performance of all the duties enjoined by the formalities of religion eighty times over.

Non-discriminating Discrimination

Nothing of that which is conducive to help man, collectively or individually, to live—not "happily"—but less *unhappily* in this world, ought to be indifferent to the Theosophist-Occultist. It is no concern of his whether his help benefits a man in his *worldly* or *spiritual* progress; his first duty is to be ever ready to help if he can, without stopping to philosophize. It is because our clerical and lay Pharisees too often offer a Christian tract, instead of the simple bread of life to the wretches they meet—whether these are striving physically or morally—that pessimism, materialism and despair win with every day more ground in our age. Weal and woe, or happiness and misery, are relative terms, Each of us finds them according to his or her predilections; one in worldly, the other in intellectual pursuits, and no one system will ever satisfy all. Hence, while one finds his pleasure and rest in family joys, another in "Socialism" and the third in a "longing only for eternal peace," there may be those who are starving for truth, in every department of the science of nature, and who consequently are yearning to learn the esoteric views about "cosmology, the evolution of man and of the Universe."

—H. P. Blavatsky

MEDIUMS AND YOGEES

What is the Difference Between the Two?

By * * *

A YOGEE is a man who has prepared himself by a long discipline of body and spirit, and is thereby rendered capable of dealing with phenomena, and receiving occult communications at will, the theory being that he, so to say, paralyzes his physical brain and reduces his mind to complete passivity by one of the numerous modes at his command, one of which is the magnetization of the second set of faculties pertaining to and exercised by the spiritual or inner man. The soul is inducted by the body, and, in its turn, is used to liberate the spirit, which is thus placed into direct rapport with the object desired. For example: A telegraph line at stations A, B, C, D, E, in ordinary cases, sends messages from A to B, B to C, and so on; but, when the several stations are connected, the message may be received direct at E from A without the intermediate stations being made aware of it. In the same manner, the nerves becoming passive, the "Yog" power controls the other faculties, and finally enables the spirit to receive a communication, which, in the other case, it cannot, because it must act through several mediums.

As the magnetic power is directed to any particular faculty, so that faculty at once forms a direct line of communication with the spirit[1] which, receiving the impressions, conveys them back to the physical body.[2]

The spirit cannot grasp at the communications it desires to receive, unassisted by the physical organization, just as, in the case of a lunatic, the spirit is present, but the faculty of reason is lost, and, therefore, the spirit cannot make the man sane; or, as in the case of a blind man, the

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Note.—This article, edited by H. P. Blavatsky, was first printed in the *Theosophist* for May, 1882, and was reprinted in Theosophy for February, 1917.

[1] Sixth principle—*spiritual* soul.

[2] In the normal or natural state, the sensations are transmitted from the lowest physical to the highest spiritual body, *i.e.*, from the first to the 6th principle (the 7th being no organized or conditioned body, but an infinite hence unconditioned principle or state), the faculties of each body having to awaken the faculties of the next higher one to transmit the message in succession, until they reach the last, when, having received the impression, the latter (the spiritual soul) sends it back in an inverse order to the body. Hence, the faculties of some of the "bodies" (we use this word for want of a better term) being less developed, they fail to transmit the message correctly to the highest principle, and thus

spirit and reasoning powers are sound, but the faculty of sight is destroyed; hence the soul of the blind man cannot realize the impressions which would be conveyed to it by the optic nerves and retina.

The spirit is an immortal ether (principle?) which cannot be impaired in any way, and, although it is, to a certain extent, subservient to the body and its faculties during the life-time of the body it is attached to, it can, through their agency, be so liberated in a higher or lesser degree as to be made to act independently of the other principles. This can be achieved by magnetic power or nerve power, if preferred, and thus the spiritual man be enabled to receive communications from other spirits, to traverse space and produce phenomena, to assume any shape and appear in any form it desires.

The secret of the theory is this, that the Yogee, possessing the power of self-mesmerisation and having a perfect control over all his inner principles, sees whatever he desires to see, rejecting all elementary influences which tend to contaminate his purity.

The medium receives his communications differently. He *wishes* for "spirits"; they are attracted towards him, their magnetic influences controlling his faculties in proportion to the strength of their respective magnetic powers and the passivity of the subject; the nervous fluid conveys their impressions to the soul or spirit in the same manner, and often the same results are produced as in the case of the Yogee, with this important difference that they are not what the medium or spiritist wishes, but what the spirits (elementary influences) will produce; hence it is that sometimes (in spiritism) a question on one subject is asked, and a reply of a different nature received, irrelevant to the point and more or less after the "Elementary's" disposition. The spiritist cannot at desire produce a fixed result, the Yogee can. The spiritist runs the risk of evil influences, which impair the faculties the soul has to command,

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also fail to produce the right impression upon the physical senses, as a telegram may have started, to the place of its destination, faultless and have been bungled up and misinterpreted by the telegraph operator at some intermediate station. This is why some people, otherwise endowed with great intellectual powers and perceptive faculties, are often utterly unable to appreciate—say, the beauties of nature, or some particular moral quality; as, however perfect their physical intellect—unless the original, material or rough physical impression conveyed has passed in a circuit through the sieve of every "principle" from 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, up to 7, and down again from 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, to No. 1 and that every "sieve" is in good order—the spiritual perception will always be imperfect. The Yogi, who, by a constant training and incessant watchfulness, keeps his septenary instrument in good tune and whose spirit has obtained a perfect control over all, can, at will, and by paralyzing the functions of the 4 intermediate principles, communicate from body to spirit and *vice versa* —direct.—Ed. *Theosophist.*

and these faculties—being more prone to evil than good (as everything having a great percentage of impure matter in it)—are rapidly influenced. The Yogee overcomes this, and his faculties are entirely within his control, the soul acquiring a greater scope for working them and keeping them in check; for, although the soul is their ruler, yet it is subservient to them. I will give a familiar illustration: A battery generates electricity, the wires convey the current, and the mechanism is put in motion. Just so, the soul is the generator or battery, the nerves the wires, and the faculties the mechanism made to work. The Yogee forms a direct connection between his spiritual soul and any faculty, and, by the power of his trained will, that is by magnetic influence, concentrates all his powers in the soul, which enables him to grasp the subject of his enquiry and convey it back to the physical organs, through the various channels of communication.[3]

If the Yogee desires to see a vision, his optic nerves receive the magnetic fluid; if an answer to a question is wanted, the faculties of thought and perception are charged by him; and so on. If he desires to traverse space in spirit, this is easily done by him by transferring the faculty of *will,*[4] and, as he may have acquired more or less power, so will he be able to produce greater or minor results.

The soul of the medium does not become the generator. It is not the battery. It is a Leyden jar, charged from the magnetic influence of the "spirits." The faculties are put in action just as the spirits, so-called, make them work from the jar they have charged with their own currents. These currents, being magnetic, take after the invisibles' own good or evil disposition. The influence of a really good spirit is not left upon the earth after death, so that, in reality, there are *no* good spirits, although some may not be mischievous, while others may be full of real deviltry. The question arises, how the influences of the bad ones are left behind, when the soul exists no more on earth after death? Well, just as light from the sun illumines an object, which reflects certain invisible active rays, and these, concentrated in a camera, produce a latent image on a photographic plate; in like manner the evil propensities of man are developed and form an atmosphere around him, which is so impregnated with his magnetic influence that this outer shell (as it

[3] Or—direct, which is oftener the case, we believe.—Ed. *Theosophist.*

[4] From the physical to the Spiritual body and concentrating it there, as we understand it.—Ed. *Theosophist.*

were) retains the latent impressions of good or evil deeds. These, after death, are attached to certain localities, and travel as quick as thought wherever an attractive influence is exercised the stronger, they being less dangerous and less attracted to men in general, but more to spiritists who attract them by the erratic power of their will, *i.e.,* their own ill-governed magnetic power. Have not many experienced coming across a man unknown to them, whose very appearance has been repulsive, and, at the sight of whom, feelings of distrust and dislike spring up in them spontaneously, although they knew nothing of or against him? On the other hand, how often do we meet a man who, at first sight, seems to attract us to him, and we feel as if we could make a friend of him, and if, by chance, we become acquainted with that person, how much we appreciate his company. We seem lost in hearing him speak, and a certain sympathy is established between us for which we cannot account. What is this, but our own outer shell coming in contact with his and partaking of the magnetic influences of that shell or establishing a communication between each other.

The medium is also influenced by his own spirit sometimes, the reaction of his nerves magnetizing some faculties accidentally, while the elementary spirits are magnetizing the other senses; or a stray current reaches some faculty which their magnetism has not reached, and this leads to some of those incomprehensible messages, which are quite irrelevant to what is expected, and a frequent occurrence which has always been the great stumbling block at all séances.

Sensitive and Active Faculties

There are not only two principles opposed to each other in man, there are three. For there are, in him, three lives and three orders of faculties. Though all should be in accord and in harmony between the sensitive and the active faculties which constitute Man, there would still be a nature superior, a third life which would not be satisfied; which would make felt the truth that there is another happiness, another wisdom, another perfection, at once above the greatest human happiness, above the highest wisdom, or intellectual and moral perfection of which the human being is susceptible.

—Maine de Biran

MEDIUMSHIP

THERE is no more misunderstood or misapplied word than "Medium." Having been appropriated by the Spiritist, it is, as a natural result, to-day supposed to mean just what he makes it mean.

Men take a word, saddle it with a meaning, ride it rough shod on a full gallop over and into everything until other men shrink in terror from it; or else he stands and curses it for a while and curses it for a vile and useless thing. Those who have given the word its present meaning, ascribing all things to the work of disembodied spirits, have made the Medium what he is, and taking to their bosoms the Frankenstein whom they have raised—hug him close, whether he be angel or devil. So long as the Medium gives forth the utterances of *"Spirits"* it matters not at all whether they are the words of divine truth, pure lies, or the thoughts of the Medium; without the slightest true effort to discover the source, all is accepted and claimed for Spirits. This and some other modes of proceeding have discouraged many intelligent students from researches touching Mediumship, and caused all men, outside of a limited number, to distrust or fear the name.

Nevertheless Mediumship does exist, no matter how much it may be reviled or we be prejudiced against it. But Mediumship does not consist wholly in reality of so called communications from dead men, or the alleged materialization of Spirit forms through whose veins the red blood of Nature courses, and whose breaths frequently bear suspicious odor of onions. While there is not one of the phases of Spiritism which is not founded upon a truth, yet these demonstrations almost generally are the results of unscrupulous persons seeking gain for self. A Medium gaining a little knowledge of some unfamiliar occult law, takes it for granted that all is learned, calls it a spirit, and immediately applies it to his own purposes. Finding he can go only a certain length with it, instead of seeking further knowledge, he strains and improvises upon it, to gain his ends or the gold he covets. We do not say they are not Mediums, for they are. All the charlatans and pretenders who cling to the skirts of Spiritism also. They are Mediums for the lower passions and elementals. The error of Spiritists lies in the fact that they ascribe

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NOTE.—This article, first printed in the *Path* for November, 1887, was signed "Albertus" —pseudonym of Jasper Niemand. It was last reprinted in THEOSOPHY for August, 1923.

all things to Spirits. Clairaudience, Clairvoyance, Psychometry, Hypnotism, etc., are all claimed as the work of a Spirit or Control.

All men are Mediums or Sensitives, and to what extent they little know. We do not claim that all men are Mediums for Spirits of dead men, or that they are all instruments for the most exalted Intelligences, but they are Mediums for Elementals—the embodied, the disembodied, for those who never have or may never be embodied—for all that the Astral holds, and sometimes for that which is beyond the Astral. They are Mediums for their own Inner and Higher selves or those of other men, and frequently failing to recognize them, they call them "Spirits."

The Psychometrist is a Medium or Sensitive, but he is such for the manifestation of the souls of things. The Hypnotic also, but he is for the manifestation of his own and the latent powers of other mortals. The Clairvoyant sees that which is recorded on the Astral.

The Clairaudient may hear the voices of Spirits, he may quite as easily hear the thought, but unspoken words, of other living men, the voices of forces or that of his own unrecognized Inner or Higher Self.

Upon the Astral Light all things are recorded; the knowledge of ages, the acts of all time, the forms of all who have died and all who live, the thoughts of all who have ever existed or do exist are photographed upon it. It has been and is being daily admitted more freely by wise men, that there are other forces and powers in Nature of which we, largely, have little knowledge. The souls of animate and inanimate things, the lights, colors and auras of nonluminous bodies, the powers of and forces exerted by immovable or quiescent things, and the effects of all these upon the human organism, are realized only to a slight extent by the enlightened and unprejudiced scientist, and fully known to the *true* occult student.

Thought passes to and fro from man to man. At a higher level it does the same from higher intelligences to man, and all in a sphere beyond the material. Men, from different causes, rising to different levels above their ordinary selves, come into the Astral where all is spread out before them. They see and read only that for which they are fitted, and comprehend only that for which they are prepared. Through conscious or unconscious exaltation they rise into or come in contact with some current of thought or unspoken word which enters their brains by divers roads. Comprehended partly perhaps, but being entirely foreign to their normal personal manner of thinking—knowing they have heard a voice—it is ascribed to a Spirit, although in fact it may be the thought

of a living man they hear, feel, see or are repeating. All men who by effort, training, or supersensitive personality, lift themselves consciously or are lifted unconsciously above the material, and secure the wisdom, knowledge and inspiration of other planes, are mediumistic.

Every student who has sought the Occult and attained his object has been a Medium, from Buddha, Pythagoras, Zoroaster, Apollonius, Plato, Jesus, Boehme, down to those of later times or of to-day.

The Adept as well as the Chela, the Initiate as well as the Neophyte, the Master as well as the Student. The Chela is but the Medium for his own latent possibilities—his Master and Nature's laws. The Neophyte likewise, for all by a striving for a high ideal, seek to place themselves upon a plane where Occult laws may make themselves visible or intelligible through their agency, and the silent voices of the Great Unseen become audible, be they individualized or diffused through all space as forces are. All things speak and convey a meaning, nothing is silent —all things speak from the monad, through all nature, forces, spheres, and space to the Omniscient silence—the ever living Word, the voice of the All Wise, and all men hear or feel some of these in some way and are Mediums for them.

Forces there are which wait but the will or desire of souls to spring into a certain degree of human intelligence, and make themselves heard to and through the one who has brought them into Material life.

Man's body is but a Medium. If it be not for his own Inner and Higher Self, then it is for those of other men; for we express the thoughts and acts of others quite as often as our own.

There has never been a wise or good word spoken, a note of true music sounded, a line of true poetry penned, a harmonious blending of color painted that was not the result of Mediumship. There never was an occult law explained, a divine mystery revealed through men, chela, student, Adept or Master, that was not the result of Mediumship.

The Master is higher than the chela who is his Medium. There is something higher than the Master, and he is Its Medium; looked at in its true light Mediumship is one of the wonders of the Creator. He who possesses most of this gift, realizing what it is and knowing how to wisely use it, may feel himself supremely blest. The Mystic and true Theosophist realizing what a Medium really is, may well hesitate before he joins with those who cast aside divine wisdom because it has come through an instrument declared in horror by some to be Mediumistic.

NOTES ON THE DHAMMAPADA

CONSIDERED jointly, chapters 13 and 14 of the *Dhammapada* suggest an interesting sequence, corresponding to the legend of Buddha's own progress through stages of enlightenment.

Canto 13 is entitled, simply, "The World," and it is evidently Gotama's intention first to focus the eye of the disciple on average human understanding. Until we see that the false and superficial *are* false and superficial, we are not ready to cross "to the farther shore." Two characteristic verses:

> Come, look at this world; it is like a painted, ornate royal chariot. The foolish are sunk in it; the discerning are not glamoured by it.
>
> This world is wrapt in darkness. Only a few can see here. Only a few birds escape the net. Only a few escape into the heavenly light.

But one does not have to escape the world, in a literal sense, to see everything that there exists in a fresh perspective. All who become mindful of the spiritual life, who sense that the soul and not the body is the "really real," have already entered into a new existence:

> He who was heedless but who now is restrained and reflective is like the moon freed from a cloud; he brightens the world.
>
> The Swans take the path of the sun because of their supernormal powers. So do the wise; having conquered Mara.
>
> He who by his good deeds transforms his evil acts is like the moon when freed from a cloud.

"The wise," Buddha says, "enjoy the world of heavenly bounty," and this enjoyment "is better than going to heaven, is better than lordship over many worlds." Now, Canto 14 indicates the manner in which one begins to *break* the bonds of Mara. The disciple, nourishing the seed of self-reliance, no longer spends all his energies following the "tracks" made by other men. He is striving to get beyond doctrine and authority, to the truth of his own being; therefore, his thoughts and deeds cannot be measured as can those of ordinary men:

> By what track can you allure One who is enlightened? Trackless indeed is He. His victory nought can undo. None of this world can touch that victory. He is a Seer of limitless range.

If a man follows any sort of "track," he is the victim of propaganda. Promised rewards by doctrine and ceremonial, he is like the donkey with a carrot suspended in front of his nose—led wherever his psy-

chologizer wants him to go. When men are responsive to petty desires and egotistical ambitions, their thought is plainly grooved—and therefore it is a matter of scientific prediction to determine what they will do in any given circumstance. And, to become a "trackless man whose path is as free as the flight of birds in the sky," is to eliminate all fear. The fearful man will run for shelter, and, if fearful enough, starve to death in his hut. Thus Buddha writes:

> Men driven by fear seek refuge on mountains, in forests, under sacred trees or at shrines. Such refuge is not secure, such refuge is not the best. Such refuge frees not a man from pain.

So the refuge sought by the true disciple must be within his knowledge of the Great Law. He is as independent of pain as he is of avarice, but his *inter*-dependence still may be measured by his willingness to pay free homage where homage is due:

> He who pays homage to those who are worthy of homage, be they the Enlightened Ones or Their Disciples—those who have overcome the host of evil and crossed beyond the stream of sorrow—he who pays homage to the Fearless and Peaceful Ones, his merit cannot be measured by any.

Verse 7 of Canto 14 brings the important question of just how Buddha defines the "higher life." There he recommends: "Discipline thyself according to the law, dwell with solitude, be devoted to higher thought." The use of "with" in relation to "solitude" may offer a clue, since the suggestion is not for the disciple to become a recluse, but to be *able* to be equally at home in solitude or among the multitudes. Dwelling *with* solitude means to be unafraid of loneliness, and to be unafraid of loneliness means possession of a courage which enables a man to be true to his own vision in the face of the threats of isolation. So the "higher thought" is quite apparently meant to be something other than ruminations upon one or another doctrinal presentation; the higher thought, for the Buddhist, is simply that kind of self-examination which leads us to see the needs of others more clearly because we see ourselves more clearly—most particularly, see through or around our weaknesses.

This point is quite clear in Zen Buddhism, and the relationship of Buddha's "higher thought" to esoteric teachings intimated. Hubert Benoit, in his *Supreme Doctrine—Psychological Studies in Zen Thought,* furnishes a suggestive passage in this regard:

> Zen says to us: "Look straight into your own nature." Certainly, but I, as a natural man, realise that I do not succeed in doing so. This

way of looking depends on the "opening of the third eye," and everything takes place in me as though this third eye was always closed. I have understood that the third eye exists in me and that no film covers it; there is nothing wrong with it, it does not have to be cured; but it is used to remaining shut and I have to do something in order to get rid of this habit. I ask myself, therefore, how I am to lose this habit from which spring all my sufferings. I have understood that there ought to be a certain way of using my two ordinary eyes, that is to say with my ordinary attention which should gradually do away with the spasm of the eyelid of the third eye and enable me one day to see suddenly and definitely into my own nature. I ask myself then what this way may be. What is this way of looking which, possibly in my present state yet incapable by itself of giving me the "vision into my own nature," will nevertheless modify my state in such a way that it will cease to oppose the "opening of the third eye?"

C. J. Ducasse's discussion of Buddhism in *The Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion* supplies a correlative passage, suggesting the Buddhist conception of relationship between the mastering of the inner confusion, and the obligation to use one's natural skill and powers for doing worth-while work in the world. Ducasse first comments on the "inwardness" which Dr. Benoit makes the subject of his entire work, and this is indeed the essential characteristic of Buddhism as distinguished from other religious traditions. Ducasse sums up by identifying Buddhism with "the profound conviction that subjective states—attitudes, feelings, thoughts, and impulses—are important in themselves, and vastly more important than are objective things."

The latter have importance only if, and only to the extent that, we permit them to affect our state of mind. The statement in one of the Buddhist scriptures that "whatever is transient is full of sorrow" is true enough, but only because, or if, one clings to what passes. And desire can be frustrated only if it is desire *for external results* from one's acts, not if it is desire simply *to try* for external results with such skill and powers—great, modest, or small—as one happens actually to have. Merely to act on *this* desire automatically fulfills it; for where desire is specifically desire to try, trying constitutes succeeding. And of course, considering external results, it is always one's *trying,* and nothing but one's *trying,* which accomplishes those which circumstances happened to permit. So nothing outer is lost that was possible, but inner peace is gained, if one confines his desires to trying—trying for such outer results as he believes would be good.

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK— AND ANSWER

IT was said in an evening lecture of ULT that we should be aware of the limitations of convention; so that our evaluations of good and evil will be outside the confinements of conventionality. Is there any valid use for conventions, if we are supposed to form our conception of justice outside *convention?*

(*a*) It might be well to inquire into the spirit of this question. The implication seems to be an acceptance of a ULT lecture as the "gospel" given out on the platform, rather than as a statement of the philosophy by one student as he sees it. Too many times a question is asked with the expectation and hope of obtaining *the* answer. Rather, the questioner should realize that all he can expect to obtain is another person's way of looking at the problem; and this is not to be accepted as "the truth," but to be taken as a spark to stir his own banked fires of mind.

Well, what is conventionality? In "What is Truth?", H.P.B. aptly called conventionality a "congenital LIE, as it is in every case a '*simulation* of feelings according to a received standard'; and where there is any simulation *there cannot be any truth.*" What effects, then, does it have on the individual? Attempts at a formulation of concepts of right and wrong are stultified: acts which are vital to human development weave the fabric of new ideas and concepts. If man makes his judgments from an authoritarian standpoint, he allows for no basic variability for the *individual.* Yet the observing of life's differentiations leads to expanding horizons; our judgments are thus constructively challenged.

Only through a free interplay of idea and action can a man fully utilize his faculties. The conventionalist may argue that collective humanity, in its effort to foster the creative interplay, has found it necessary to use convention as a means of lessening discord. The system itself is undoubtedly much easier to conform to, and there is less confusion, but do the results obtained warrant the sacrifice? The attempt to define life's experiences for everyone ends in explaining them to no one; therefore, the soul's path is never a simple one. Only through the conflict of ideas and concepts, together with their constant re-evaluation, is progress ever achieved. New ideas are often generated by those "beyond the pale," and not always by those securely self-satisfied within.

Perhaps, with the recognition that the road to collective enlightenment is through individual pursuit, man can question the bases of moralistic convention, and, by exposure, dissolve them.

(*b*) In order to fully consider this question let's also examine the opposite of conventionality—individualism. Once in a while, at least, everybody feels the urge to be "individual," to be different from "the masses," and if a human being did not have this urge he would lack an important human quality. Individualism is a doctrine or practice based on the assumption that the individual and not society is the paramount consideration or end—the conception that all values, rights, and duties originate in individuals. This statement is true, but once individuals have created values, rights, and duties, have mutually agreed and given their consent, doesn't it stand to reason that every citizen should respect these duties without feeling that he is losing a part of his precious individuality? True, all these conceptions of rights and duties do not withstand the changes of time, and have altered; and that is when a number of individuals might unite and discuss such problems for the welfare of their fellow men. Isn't this the basis of the American Constitution?

Like everything else, conventionality can be pushed too far, so that it might limit evaluations of good and evil, and distort one's sense of justice, but if common sense is used, one will have to admit that conventionality or traditions cannot be wholly condemned.

It can be said, on the other hand, that conventionality tends to work against spontaneity, originality and individuality, but, if the principles of Theosophy are understood, a continuous fight for individuality is really not necessary, because of the realization that each human being essentially *is* an individual.

Trying to be an extreme individualist can also be classified as being an egoist. The need to be different from any other being may be so great that egocentrism takes over, accentuating one's own personality. Why not sometimes ask the question: What are the dangers of extreme independence? A balanced human being does not have the need to be extremely different from other people, does not have the urge to stand separate; neither will he lean toward the other extreme—conventionality. He is able to use his own mind in important matters without hiding behind conventions.

Many more pros and cons could be discussed on this subject, but it must be realized that conventions and traditions do have their place in this world without causing anyone to lose his individuality. If a

person could understand the reason for certain conventions or traditions, the fear of being run by conventions and traditions would vanish.

(*c*) It would seem that the real purpose of convention, or rather the original idea behind convention, is to help develop mature *individuals,* those able to respect a conception of law or justice. Of course it is well known that convention, of itself, does not necessarily stimulate thought as to what is justice and morality. However, for the young person a form of discipline and some standards are necessary, and here conventions play a constructive role.

Perhaps the question could be extended to ask how we encourage a child to develop his innate sense of justice—a sense of justice that goes beyond and deeper than the mere shell of convention. It is surely this sense of justice, this being able to evaluate right from wrong in action or motive, that makes for mature individuals.

Bruno Bettelheim, in his *Truants from Life,* points out the fact that the emotionally unstable child—the child who cannot function normally in society—is the child who cannot sense *himself* in relation to another person or to life. He is unable to face things in proper proportion, cannot be just, because he has no self-respect.

Now this is true of all of us who are immature in some way or another, though perhaps to a lesser degree. Self-reliance—often developed first by the assistance from the disciplines of a group—lays the foundation for the all-important feeling of inner security. For without the conviction that no matter what happens, one can always rely upon one's self inwardly, one must always be compensating; and this compensation distorts one's vision of life and one's attitudes. A person can assume conventional interpretations of justice, yet may not have a *sense* of justice. Therefore it is necessary that people feel that they are basically capable of being *just* in all circumstances. Naturally, the parents are the ones who have the best opportunity for providing knowledge of what a sense of justice means, and they help a child develop mental tools with which he must work for the rest of his incarnation. By providing some kind of discipline, parents provide a sense of order, and this helps the sense of justice to grow.

This feeling of an inner security must be based on correctly assessing the nature of man, his potentialities and his weaknesses. If a person feels that he is truly the creator of his own destiny, the maker of his circumstances, then he will be more willing to take what comes, and

at the same time see how he can best work out of it toward something better. He is not *afraid* of justice.

The desire many people have for others to follow the same conventions no matter what areas they might cover, is that they themselves do not trust their own judgment, and do not really know what justice is. As was said, convention provides a form of discipline and control, yet often blocks thought into what principles may originally have been behind the convention. Convention has its place, but the individual must not stay within its confines so far as his mind and understanding of the complexities of human nature go. Conventions might be considered as aids to further understanding of the intricacies of man—unless one lets them become barriers. A man need not, and should not, shun convention, but conventions vary with the society, race, country, history, etc., and should therefore be taken for what they are worth. The individual moves through *forms* of life, and he should use whatever truth he can glean from the forms toward a better understanding and conception of justice toward all of life—not just the people he is most closely connected with. He must always have in mind the goal of reaching a broader conception; so he begins to develop a core of wisdom within himself, able to really tell him what is basically right.

(*d*) Real thinking is difficult. We work, out of necessity, through the psychic nature; and the psychic nature is open to all influences and is therefore very difficult to keep in line, or rather to keep track of and analyze properly. It is common experience to take something that has been presented to us, and find ourselves thinking that *we* are the authors of this idea; we adopt it as if it were our own. This can be true, and it can also be deceiving. The problem is to *know* what is truly our own, through effort of thought in assessing experience. It is not *wrong*, nor is it a waste of time, to conform to convention or to follow a certain track of thinking, or even to be under the influence of a given belief, as long as we are aware of what we are conforming to and why we are conforming—why we think it advisable to think along certain lines. We must also know where our reason, *our* belief, ends and external influence begins. In other words, we must try *always*, no matter what it is we choose to do or how we choose to do it, to figure out where we stand in regard to the different aspects of our nature, mentally, emotionally and psychically.

THE SYMBOLISM OF NUMBERS

III

IN ancient Symbolism it was always the SUN (though the Spiritual, not the visible, Sun was meant) that was supposed to send forth the chief Saviours and Avatars. Hence the connecting link between the Buddhas, the Avatars, and so many other incarnations of the highest SEVEN. The closer the approach to one's *Prototype,* "in Heaven," the better for the mortal whose personality was chosen, by his own *personal* deity (the seventh principle), as its terrestrial abode. For, with every effort of will toward purification and unity with that "Self-god," one of the lower rays breaks and the spiritual entity of man is drawn higher and ever higher to the ray that supersedes the first, until, from ray to ray, the inner man is drawn into the one and highest beam of the Parent-SUN. Thus, "the events of humanity *do* run coordinately with the number forms," since the single units of that humanity proceed one and all from the same source—the *central* and its *shadow* the visible SUN. For the equinoxes and solstices, the periods and various phases of the Solar course, astronomically and numerically expressed, are only the concrete symbols of the eternally living verity, though they do seem *abstract ideas* to uninitiated mortals.

Number Seven, the fundamental figure among all other figures in every national religious system, from Cosmogony down to man, must have its *raison d'être.* It is found among the ancient Americans, as prominently as among the Archaic Aryans and Egyptians. Says the author of the *"Sacred Mysteries among the Mayas and Quiches,* 11,500 *years ago"*: "Seven seems to have been the sacred number *par excellence* among all civilized nations of antiquity. Why? Each separate people has given a different explanation, according to the peculiar tenets of their (exoteric) religion. That this was the *number of numbers for those initiated into the sacred mysteries, there can be no doubt.* Pythagoras . . . calls it the 'Vehicle of Life' containing body and soul, since it is formed of a Quaternary, that is Wisdom and Intellect, and of a *Trinity* or *action and matter.* The Emperor Julian, *'In matrem, etc.,'* expresses himself thus: 'Were I to touch upon the initiation into our Sacred Mys-

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NOTE.—Collated from the writings of H. P. Blavatsky.

teries, which the Chaldees Bacchized, respecting the *seven-rayed* god, lighting up the soul through him, I should say things unknown to the rabble, very unknown, but well known to the blessed Theurgists'."

And who, acquainted with the Puranas, the Book of the Dead, the Zendavesta, the Assyrian tiles, and finally the Bible, and who has observed the constant occurrence of the number seven, in these records of people living from the remotest times unconnected and so far apart, can regard as a coincidence the following fact, given by the same explorer of ancient Mysteries? Speaking of the prevalence of seven as a mystic number, among the inhabitants of the "Western continent" (of America), he adds that it is not less remarkable. For: "It frequently occurs in the Popul-vuh . . . we find it besides in the *seven families* said by Sahagun and Clavigero to have accompanied the mystical personage named *Votan,* the reputed founder of the great city of Nachan, identified by some with Palenque. In the *seven caves* from which the ancestors of the Nahuatl are reported to have emerged. In the *seven cities* of Cibola, described by Coronado and Niza. . . . In the *seven Antilles;* in the *seven heroes* who, we are told, escaped the Deluge . . ."

"Heroes," moreover, whose number is found the same in every "Deluge" story—from the seven Rishis who were saved with Vaivasvata Manu, down to Noah's ark, into which beasts, fowls, and living creatures were taken by "Sevens." Thus we see the figures 1, 3, 5, 7, as perfect, because thoroughly mystic, numbers playing a prominent part in every Cosmogony and evolution of living Beings. In China, 1, 3, 5, 7, are called "celestial numbers" in the canonical *"Book of Changes."*

The explanation of it becomes evident when one examines the ancient Symbols: all these are based upon and start from the figures given from the Archaic Manuscript.

The author of the *Source of Measures* says that the foundation of the Kabala and all its mystic books is made to rest upon the *ten Sephiroth;* which is a fundamental truth. The 10 is the first Divine Manifestation containing "every possible power of exact expression of proportion."

In *Sepher Jezirah,* or Numbers of Creation, the whole process of evolution is given out in Numbers. In its "32 paths of Wisdom" the number 3 is repeated four times, and the number 4 five times. Therefore, the Wisdom of God is contained in numbers (Sephrim or Sephiroth), for Sepher (or S-ph-ra when unvowelled) means "to cipher." And therefore, also, we find Plato stating that the deity *geometrizes* in fabricating the Universe.

It is a fact well known to every conscientious student of the Kabala, that the deeper he dives into it, the more he feels convinced that unless the Kabala—or what is left of it—is read by the light of the Eastern esoteric philosophy, its study leads only to the discovery that, on the lines traced by exoteric Judaism and Christianity, the monotheism of both is nothing more exalted than ancient Astrology, now vindicated by modern Astronomy. The Kabalists never cease to repeat that *primal intelligence* can never be understood. It cannot be comprehended, nor can it be located, therefore it has to remain nameless and negative. Hence the Ain-Soph—the "UNKNOWABLE" and the "UNNAMEABLE"—which, as *it* could not be made manifest, was conceived to emanate manifesting Powers. It is then with its *emanations alone that human intellect has to, and can deal.* Christian theology, having rejected the doctrine of emanations and replaced them with direct, conscious creations of angels and the rest out of *nothing,* now finds itself hopelessly stranded between Supernaturalism, or miracle, and materialism. An *extra*-cosmic god is fatal to philosophy, an *intra*-cosmic Deity—i.e. Spirit and matter inseparable from each other—is a philosophical necessity. Separate them and that which is left is a gross superstition under a mask of emotionalism. But why "geometrize," as Plato has it, why represent these emanations under the form of an immense arithmetical table? The question is well answered by the author just cited.

"Mental perception," he says, "to become physical perception, must have the Cosmic principle of *light*: and by this, our mental circle must become visible through light; or, for its complete manifestation, the Circle must be that of physical visibility, or Light itself. Such conceptions, thus formulated, became the groundwork of the philosophy of the divine manifesting in the Universe."

The early Gnostics claimed that their Science, the Gnosis, rested on a square, the angles of which represented respectively *Sige* (Silence), *Bythos* (depth), *Nous* (Spiritual Soul or Mind), and *Aletheia* (Truth).

For them the whole of the Universe, metaphysical and material, was contained within, and could be expressed and described by the digits of Number 10, the Pythagorean *decade.*

This Decade representing the Universe and its evolution out of Silence and the *unknown* Depths of the Spiritual Soul, or *anima mundi,* presented two sides or aspects to the student. It could be, and was at first so used and applied to the Macrocosm, after which it descended to

the Microcosm, or Man. There was, then, the purely intellectual and metaphysical, or the "*inner* Science," and the as purely materialistic or "surface," both of which could be expounded by and contained in the *Decade*. It could be studied, in short, from the Universals of Plato, and the inductive method of Aristotle. The former started from a divine comprehension, when the plurality proceeded from unity, or the digits of the decade appeared, but to be finally re-absorbed, lost in the infinite Circle. The latter depended on sensuous perception alone, when the Decade could be regarded either as the unity that multiplies, or matter which differentiates, its study being limited to the plane surface; to the Cross, or the *Seven* which proceeds from the ten—or the perfect number, on Earth as in heaven.

On the plane above, the Number is no Number but a *nought*—a CIRCLE. On the plane below, it becomes *one*—which is an odd number. Each letter of the ancient alphabets having had its philosophical meaning and *raison d'être,* the number I signified with the Alexandrian Initiates a *body erect,* a living standing man, he being the only animal that has this privilege. And, by adding to the I a head, it was transformed into a P, a symbol of *paternity,* of the creative potency; while R signified a "moving man," one on his way. Hence PATER ZEUS had nothing sexual or phallic either in its sound or form of letters.

The Pythagoreans hated the binary. With them it was the origin of differentiation, hence of contrasts, discord, or matter, the beginning of evil. In the Valentinian theogony, Bythos and Sige (Depth, Chaos, matter born in Silence) are the primordial binary. With the early Pythagoreans, however, the duad was that imperfect state into which the first manifested being fell when it got detached from the Monad. It was the point from which the two roads—the Good and the Evil— bifurcated. All that which was double-faced or false was called by them "binary." ONE was alone Good, and Harmony, because no disharmony can proceed from one alone. Hence the Latin word *Solus* in relation to one and only God, the Unknown of Paul. *Solus,* however, very soon became Sol—the Sun.

The ternary is truly the number of mystery par excellence. To study it on the exoteric lines one has to read Ragon's *Cours Interprétatif des Initiations;* on the esoteric—the Hindu symbolism of numerals; as the combinations which were applied to it are numberless. It is on the occult properties of the three equal lines or sides of the Triangle that Ragon based his studies and founded the famous masonic society of

the Trinosophists (those who study *three sciences;* an improvement upon the ordinary three masonic degrees, given to those who study nothing except eating and drinking at the meetings of their lodges). "The first line of the triangle offered to the apprentice for study," writes the founder, "is the mineral kingdom, symbolized by Tubalc . . . (Tubal-cain). The second side on which the *'companion'* has to meditate, is the *vegetable* kingdom, symbolized by Schibb .·. (Schibboleth). In this kingdom begins the *generation of the bodies.* The third side is left to the master mason, who has to complete his education by the study of the *animal kingdom.* It is symbolized by *Maoben* .·. (Sun of putrefaction)" etc., etc.

The first solid figure is the *Quaternary,* symbol of immortality. It is the *pyramid*: for the pyramid stands on a triangular, square, or polygonal base, and terminates with a point at the top, thus yielding the triad and the quaternary or the 3 and 4. It is the Pythagoreans who taught the connection and relation between the gods and the numbers—in a Science called *arithmomancy.* The Soul is a number, they said, which moves of itself and contains the number 4; and spiritual and physical man is number 3, as the *ternary* represented for them not only the surface but also the principle of the formation of the physical body. Thus animals were *ternaries* only, man alone being a septenary, *when virtuous;* a *quinary* when bad, for:

Number 5 was composed of a binary and a ternary, which binary threw everything in the perfect form into disorder and confusion. The *perfect man,* they said, *was a quaternary and a ternary,* of four material and three immaterial elements; which three or elements we likewise find in 5, when it represents the *microcosm.* The latter is a compound of a binary directly relating to gross matter, and of three Spirits: "since 5 is the ingenious union of two Greek accents placed over vowels which have or have not to be *aspirated.* The first sign ' is called 'Strong Spirit' or superior Spirit, the spirit of God aspired (*spiratus*) and breathed by man. The second sign ' the lower, is the *Spirit of Love,* representing the secondary Spirit; the third embraces the whole man. It is the *universal Quintessence,* the vital fluid or Life." (*Ragon.*)

The more mystic meaning of 5 is given in an excellent article by Mr. Subba Row, in *Five Years of Theosophy*: "The Twelve Signs of the Zodiac"—in which he gives some rules that may help the inquirer to ferret out "the deep significance of ancient Sanskrit nomenclature in the old Aryan myths and allegories."

It is easy to recognize in the two spirits—the Greek accents or signs spoken of by Ragon—Atma and Buddhi, or "divine spirit and its vehicle" (spiritual soul).

The *Ogdoad* or 8 symbolizes the eternal and spiral motion of cycles, and is symbolized in its turn by the Caduceus. It shows the regular breathing of the Kosmos presided over by the eight great gods—the seven from the primeval Mother, the One and the Triad.

Then comes the number nine or the triple ternary. It is the number which reproduces itself incessantly under all shapes and figures in every multiplication. It is the sign of every circumference, since its value in degrees is equal to 9, i.e., to 3+6+0. If number 6 was the symbol of our globe ready to be animated by *a divine spirit,* 9 symbolized our earth informed by a *bad* or evil spirit.

Ten, or the Decade, brings all these digits back to unity, and ends the Pythagorean table. Hence the figure [symbolizing] *unity within zero* was the symbol of Deity, or the Universe, and of man. Such is the secret meaning of "the strong grip of the Lion's paw, of the tribe of Judah" between two hands (the *"master mason's grip"*), the joint number of whose fingers is *ten.*

If we now give our attention to the Egyptian cross, or the *Tau,* we may discover this letter, so exalted by Egyptians, Greeks, and Jews, to be mysteriously connected with the *Decade.* The *tau* is the Alpha and Omega of secret divine Wisdom, which is symbolized by the initial and the final letter of Thot (Hermes). Thot was the inventor of the Egyptian alphabet, and the letter *tau* closed the alphabets of the Jews and the Samaritans, who called this character the "end" or "perfection," "culmination" and "security." Thence—Ragon tells us—the words *terminus* (end), and *tectum* (roof), are symbols of shelter and security, which is rather a prosaic definition. But such is the usual destiny of ideas and things in this world of spiritual decadence, if also of physical progress. PAN was at one time *absolute nature,* the one and GREAT-ALL; but when history catches a first glimpse of him, Pan has already tumbled down into a godling of the fields, a rural god, and history will not recognize him, while theology makes of him the devil. Yet his seven-piped flute, the emblem of the seven forces of nature, of the seven planets, the seven musical notes, of all the septenary harmony, in short, shows well his primordial character. So with the Cross. Far earlier than the Jews had devised their golden candlestick of the temple with three sockets on one side and *four* on the other, and made of number 7

a feminine number of generation, thus introducing the phallic element into religion, the more spiritually-minded had made of the cross (as 3, 4=7), their most sacred divine symbol. In fact, Circle, Cross, and Seven—the latter being made a base of *circular* measurement—are the first primordial symbols. Pythagoras, who brought his wisdom from India, left to posterity a glimpse into this truth. His school regarded number 7 as a compound of numbers 3 and 4, which they explained in a dual manner. On the plane of the noumenal world, the triangle was, as the first conception of the manifested Deity, its image: "Father-Mother-Son"; and the Quaternary, the perfect number, was the noumenal, ideal root of all numbers and things on the physical plane. Some students, in view of the sacredness of Tetraktis and the Tetragrammaton, mistake the mystic meaning of the Quaternary. The latter was with the ancients *only a secondary* "perfection," so to speak, because it related only to the manifested planes. Whereas it is the *Triangle,* the Greek *delta,* which was the "vehicle of the unknown Deity." A good proof of it lies with the name of the Deity beginning with Delta. *Zeus* was written Deus by the Bœothians, thence the *Deus* of the Latins. This, in relation to the metaphysical conception, with regard to the meaning of the Septenary *in the phenomenal world,* but for purposes of profane or exoteric interpretation, the symbolism changed. *Three* became the ideograph of the *three material elements*—air, water, earth; and four became the principle of all that which is neither corporeal nor perceptible. But this has never been accepted by the real Pythagoreans. Viewed as a compound of 6 and 1, the *senary* and the *unity,* number seven was the invisible centre, the spirit of everything, as there exists no body with six lines constituting its form without a *seventh* being found as the central point in it (see crystals and snowflakes in so-called *inanimate* nature). Moreover, number *seven,* they said, has all the perfection of the UNIT—the number of numbers. For as absolute unity is uncreated, and impartite (hence number-less) and no number can produce it, so the seven: no digit contained within the decade can beget or produce it. And it is 4, which affords an arithmetical division between *unity* and *seven,* as it surpasses the former by the same number (three), as it is itself surpassed by the seven, since *four* is by as many numbers above *one,* as *seven* is above *four.*

(*To be concluded*)

THOUGHTS ON METHOD

ONE cannot go far in the study of Theosophy without realizing that method, or *how* to study, is as important as content, or the subject-matter constituting the philosophy. The two, content and method, are not to be separated, for their relationship is as intimate as that of end and means on the moral plane. In the ethics of the Wisdom-Religion, no matter how noble an end may appear to be, its attainment never justifies ignoble means. This idea is not unrelated to our topic, for in the field of the occult, methods exercise a subtle yet very real influence on our moral perceptions. As an instance, there is the difference between Hatha and Raja Yoga. The Hatha Yoga system prescribes physical exercises which bring on changes in our mortal principles with the object of acquiring psychic powers. The lower lives making up the *personal* man being continually accentuated, the Higher Triad—the Real Man—has difficulty in making itself felt, and so the moral nature is gradually dulled.

Another example involves the well-known method of scientific inquiry, the inductive method which seeks to deduce general laws and principles from the study, observation, and classification of particulars. In the investigation of psychic phenomena, the inductive method, if relied upon exclusively, may lead to erroneous and dangerous conclusions. One scientist of unquestioned repute who was so misled was Sir Oliver Lodge. He became an avowed spiritualist as the result of this mode of investigation. He applied his familiar inductive method to the phenomena of spiritualism as exhibited through mediums. The particulars bearing on survival after death which the mediums furnished under test conditions so impressed him that he readily accepted the phenomena as reliable evidence of human survival in the "other world" after death.

What was it in Sir Oliver Lodge's method of inquiry which caused him to be self-deceived, and even become an unwitting deceiver of others who trusted his deductions as a careful scientist? Theosophy holds that relying on the senses for our knowledge of reality is starting at the wrong end; and this is true for both our normal physical senses and the abnormal astral and psychic senses, the latter being even more deceptive. *The Voice of the Silence* warns: "Mistrust they senses: they are false. But within thy body—the shrine of thy sensations—seek

in the Impersonal for the 'Eternal Man'; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha."

"Buddha" means Enlightened, and it is there, in the Eternal Man or reincarnating Ego and Higher Self, that we shall find enlightenment and a knowledge of the real and enduring. The senses we are called upon to mistrust are not just the physical senses, but even more, the astral senses. Regarding the latter senses and their sphere, a footnote in the *Voice* sets forth the inherent dangers of this astral region. It is "the psychic world of supersensuous perceptions and of deceptive sights—the world of mediums. It is the great 'Astral Serpent' of Eliphas Levi. No blossom plucked in those regions has ever yet been brought down on earth without its serpent coiled round the stem. It is the world of the Great Illusion."

Spirit and Matter are a pair of opposites only so far as they represent the two poles of existence, Spirit being consciousness *awake* or Self-consciousness, and Matter being consciousness *asleep* or not yet aware of Itself. The very fact that they are opposite poles shows interdependence, as we cannot have one pole without the other. Spirit and Matter are not independent realities, as *The Secret Doctrine* points out, but aspects or facets of One Supreme, Immutable Unity. In the manifested spheres they are ever co-eternal, Matter being the servient or "inferior" aspect, its function being to serve as a vehicle or *upadhi,* of whatever degree, of Spirit or Consciousness. In the seventh chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita,* Krishna divides his nature into the superior and the inferior. The superior is the Knower or Consciousness *per se,* and the inferior takes in *all the rest,* or the many aspects or differentiated states of consciousness from the highest to the lowest, every aspect or state being marked by an *upadhi* of a degree of refinement or ethereality in consonance with the state it reflects. It is the Knower or Superior nature that is the creator, the initiator, the driving power, and the indwelling spirit of the inferior nature, whether we count its division as eightfold as in the *Gita,* or as twenty-five-fold or more as remarked by William Q. Judge in his *Gita Notes.*

Applying this to our study of method, it becomes clear that the deductive and inductive systems are not an irreconcilable pair of opposites, nor mutually exclusive, and this is recognized even by science. The difference between science and Theosophy in this regard is in the point of view taken, or the aspect on which the chief emphasis is placed. Science places the major emphasis on the particulars, and will not admit

a law or principle except as determined and limited by the observation of a series of particulars. This viewpoint follows from the erroneous concept that knowledge is acquired only through, and is thus completely dependent upon, the senses. Scientists themselves recognize the constricted nature of their method, as they concede that their deduced generalizations are no more than temporary working hypotheses, and, like a house of cards, liable to topple over in the face of a "particular" that does not fit into the picture. Theosophy regards the senses as *servants* of the mind, and holds that Manas, the Self-conscious Ego, is capable of apprehending Universals *directly,* and that the Truth of the Universals so perceived is axiomatic and self-evident, i.e., evident to the Self. Theosophy recognizes that there is value in the inductive system as pursued by science, but it accords to this method its proper place and no more; and its study of particulars is conducted against the background, and in the light of, the self-evident Eternal Verities. This point of view frees us of the inhibitions which the scientific method imposes on the mind, while at the same time it imposes a new discipline. As said in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (p. 28):

> The senses and organs are esteemed great, but the thinking self is greater than they. The discriminating principle (*Buddhi*) is greater than the thinking self, and that which is greater than the discriminating principle is He (the Supreme Spirit, the true Ego). Thus knowing what is greater than the discriminating principle and strengthening the lower by the Higher Self, do thou of mighty arms slay this foe which is formed from desire and is difficult to seize.

While the method of beginning with universals was pre-eminently that of Plato, and while, its opposite, beginning with particulars, traces back to Aristotle, these methods did not originate with these thinkers. They undoubtedly represent two philosophic and scientific points of view that have always existed and been variously expressed. A precept in *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 62) and the footnote in connection with it refer to two ancient schools and their two opposing points of emphasis. One system can never furnish more than *Samvritti,* which is defined as relative truth. The proponents of *Samvritti* were known as the *Madhyamikas,* and they are called the great Nihilists and Deniers "for whom everything is *parikalpita,* an illusion and an error in the world of thought and the subjective, as much as in the objective universe." The other school was that of the *Yogacharyas* who held to the existence of *Paramarthasatya* or "absolute truth." These were the "great

spiritualists," and they affirmed "that every object exists owing to a previous cause or by a concatenation." This school finds its analogue in those who think and reason on the basis of life's Eternal Verities: the Fundamental Propositions which underlie Theosophy and every philosophy worthy of the name. The *Voice* precept admonishes that if we would avoid becoming the playground of *Samvritti,* "origin of all the world's delusions," we have to saturate ourselves with pure *Alaya,* and become as one with Nature's Soul-Thought.

Just as Spirit and Matter must be viewed in the light of the Great Unity of which they are aspects, so the deductive and the inductive systems must be seen as aspects or poles of a unitary method, a method more aptly thought of as an "attitude," or a philosophical position assumed—the attitude and position of non-separateness or ever-existing synthesis. This dual aspect of a Unitary Process is eloquently expressed by William Q. Judge in "The Synthesis of Occult Science":

> Back of occult science there lies a complete and all-embracing Philosophy. This philosophy is not simply synthetical in its methods, for the simplest as the wildest hypothesis can claim that much; but it is *synthesis itself.* It regards Nature as one complete whole, and so the student of occultism may stand at either point of observation. He may from the standpoint of Nature's wholeness and completeness follow the process of segregation and differentiation to the minutest atom conditioned in space and time; or, from the phenomenal display of the atom, he may reach forward and upward till the atom becomes an integral part of cosmos, involved in the universal harmony of creation.

Two ends or points of observation are mentioned in this quotation, and these correspond broadly to the points of observation emphasized by the deductive and the inductive systems. At one end—that of the homogeneous Spirit—the observer perceives wholeness and universals with the eye of Soul, from which he can follow the process of segregation into the many particulars or heterogeneous elements. At the opposite point—that of Matter—the observer can, with the eye of intellect joined to the eye of Soul, trace back the phenomenal, segregated units to their source in the ALL. But the inductive process pursued in the spirit of Mr. Judge's quotation cannot be applied in balanced fashion until the other, the recognition of the Whole and Universal, is perceived and kept ever in the background of the mind. Hence the ordinary scientist in *his* inductive investigations can never rise higher than purely physical plane deductions, the value and validity of which

are limited and ephemeral at best. The highest deduction and transcendental speculation of a thinker who confines his outlook to the visible, phenomenal universe, can, like water, never rise higher than its source. Herbert Spencer was such a thinker, and regarding his "Unknowable," *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 281) comments: "The 'unknowable' of Herbert Spencer bears only a faint resemblance to that transcendental *Reality* believed in by Occultists, often appearing merely a personification of a '*force* behind phenomena'—an infinite and eternal *Energy* from which all things proceed."

An application of the method of reasoning from particulars to universals is involved in the second of the three declared objects of the Theosophical Movement: "The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study." In the pamphlet, *The United Lodge of Theosophists—Its Mission and its Future,* the following explanatory clause is added: ". . . in order to detect the vital principles common to all of them and thus do away with sectarianism and exclusiveness." Such comparative studies have been made before the advent of the present Theosophical Movement, with its vast output of heretofore secret knowledge, yet what scholar has detected and plainly set forth the vital principles common to all of them? It was only *after* the appearance of such works as *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* that students of Theosophy were able to detect and trace the thread of Ariadne running through these religions, philosophies, and sciences, no matter how attenuated and discolored that thread may have become in passing through the hands of the founders of special sects. This is another instance of the maxim, "Nature Unaided Fails." The two processes, the deductive and the inductive, being interdependent, as already pointed out, the consideration of particulars will lead to right and unassailable conclusions only when investigated and studied in the light of the self-evident universals. In the study of the Second Object, it is the Universals of the immemorial Wisdom-Religion, now clearly set forth and expounded in the present-day message of Theosophy, which enable the student to detect the vital principles common to all religions, philosophies, and sciences, and also to detect where these have departed from the universal principles.

The aim of the Teachers was to raise the Buddhi and Manas of the Race. The parallelism between one's inner growth and his comprehen-

sion of the more abstruse aspects of Theosophy is set forth in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 326-7):

> The evolution of the GOD-IDEA proceeds apace with man's own intellectual evolution. So true it is that the noblest ideal to which the religious Spirit of one age can soar, will appear but a gross caricature to the philosophic mind in a succeeding epoch! The philosophers themselves had to be *initiated into perceptive mysteries,* before they could grasp the correct idea of the ancients in relation to this most metaphysical subject. Otherwise—outside such initiation—for every thinker there will be a "Thus far shalt thou go and no farther," mapped out by his intellectual capacity, as clearly and as unmistakeably as there is for the progress of any nation or race in its cycle by the law of Karma. . . . Hence, as already remarked, the highest flights of modern (Western) metaphysics have fallen far short of the truth. Much of current Agnostic speculation on the existence of the "First Cause" is little better than veiled materialism—the terminology alone being different.

There is profound wisdom in Great Teachers' constant direction to pupils to take and maintain the highest position possible—the position of the Higher Self, the God *within* every man. Such a position taken in conjunction with living the higher life establishes a clear channel or bridge between the lower sense-mind (lower Manas) and the higher supersensible consciousness (Buddhi-Manas); and the result is an unlimited series of progressive awakenings, every such awakening being a veritable initiation. We close with some stirring advice by William Q. Judge (*Letters,* p. 126):

> Arouse, arouse in you the meaning of "Thou are That." Thou art the Self. This is the thing to think of in meditation, and if you believe it, then tell others the same. You have read it before, but now try to realize it more and more each day, and you will have the light you want.

ON THE LOOKOUT

Contemporary Issues in Religion

That religious discussion is presently in constructive ferment there can be little doubt, and it is with the feeling of recording a "fulfillment of prophecy" that Lookout notes the "Theosophic" aspects of these trends. Even among the apologists for Christianity, there are evident attempts at philosophical fairness—or, at least, judiciousness in the rephrasing of outgrown theological doctrines.

Writing for the British magazine, *Encounter* (September, 1956), the Rev. A. R. Vidler admits that the decline of traditional Christian faith is largely due to the failure of "professionals" to be sufficiently philosophical. People at large, he affirms, are still greatly interested in discussing the basic theological questions, while the clergy commonly avoids anything which may upset time-honored interpretations. "It is my own experience," Vidler writes "that there is more interest in the basic theological questions, as distinguished from what is secondary or trivial, among laymen outside as well as inside the churches than there is in many clerical circles. But there is no ground here for complacency about the future of theology, nor indeed for confidence, unless there be truth in the 17th century adage that man's extremity is God's opportunity."

"The Scandal of Particularity"

Mr. Vidler distinguishes between the theological and the historical approach to religion, and while he clearly stands for "God," he is eminently fair to those whose rational instincts preclude similar belief. He writes:

> It may be incredible that God is personal and knowable as persons are knowable, but the presupposition that he is so is what makes theology a distinct study or science, and it is also what gives theology an interest different from that of history or philosophy or ethics. Only if this essential presupposition of theology is taken seriously, can it have a contemporary importance and a future worthy of consideration.
>
> But there is a further point that must be made about this essential presupposition of theology. The presupposition is not only that there is a Supreme Being who is capable of making himself known to mankind, but that in fact he has done so, above all through his dealings

with a particular people (the Hebrews) and in a particular course of events which culminated in the "advent" or coming of Jesus Christ. This again may be incredible, and is certainly scandalous to all who suppose that, if there were a God who could reveal himself, he ought to have done so universally and simultaneously to the whole human race. The offensive character of the belief that God has entrusted a revelation, which should be for all men, to a "peculiar" people (the Hebrews before Christ, the Christians after Christ) is frankly acknowledged by perceptive theologians: they call it "the scandal of particularity." But it is this belief—this presupposed belief—that distinguishes theology from the general history of religions and from metaphysics: it is this that gives it its distinct or peculiar interest.

PHILOSOPHICAL RELIGION?

Another exponent of the personal God doctrine, Prof. A. Campbell Garnett of the University of Wisconsin, published in 1955 a volume entitled, *Religion and the Moral Life.* This book, which undertakes a similar assessment, is as fair-minded as Mr. Vidler's, showing considerable sympathy for anti-religionists. The defense of the believer, according to Prof. Garnett, rests on the claim that "the pure essence of his religion is entirely good in its influence." However, he goes on to state the opposite position:

The critic of traditional religion, however, will not concede this. Indeed, it is just at this point that he makes his attack. It is the central feature of all traditional religion, he maintains, that is the root of the trouble. It directs man to find his ultimate end, and the ultimate ground or authority for all his actions, in some principle or form of being beyond himself and beyond human society. The result of this, even at best, it is claimed, is a weakening of concern for the problems of man in this world and a rigidity of outlook upon human problems which fails to take full account of the relativity of every ethical question to a multitude of changing conditions and varying values. At its worst, this devotion to some transcendent form of being produces terrible evils.

BUDDHISM AND TAOISM ADMITTED AS RELIGIONS

Though later arguing for the superiority of the "personal God," Prof. Garnett admits a broader common ground for religious inspiration:

The central feature of all traditional religion certainly is the direction of attention to some principle or form of being beyond the self and human society which is accepted as ultimate ground or authority

for decision of questions of human behavior, some form of being or principle supremely worthy of human devotion. In theism this object of devotion is a personal God; in polytheism it is a pantheon and hierarchy of anthropomorphic deities; in certain philosophical religions, such as Taoism, Buddhism, and the Vedanta of Sankara, it is an impersonal cosmic moral principle. There is no particular form of belief about this object of devotion that can be regarded as essential to religion, not even that vaguely described "recognition on the part of man of some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny" referred to in the definition of religion—*Oxford Dictionary.*

The Crux of the Matter

Since Prof. Garnett and Mr. Vidler are typical of the best of the "personal-God apologists," it is interesting to note how *Religion and the Moral Life* endeavors to establish the validity of the God concept. Prof. Garnett has written that "the distinctive element in religion is not that of belief, but of attitude, the attitude of devotion to something other than the self," and since that "other-than-the-self" may be considered an "impersonal moral principle," the God idea must be somehow reasoned back into standing. Prof. Garnett rather incredibly preserves God by insisting that the presence of conscience in man demonstrates the existence of an external being!

The constraint of conscience must be attributed to the relation presently existing between the self and some power beyond it that exercises this influence, though there may be many different explanations of the nature of this relation and the way the influence is exercised. Secondly, that power must be regarded as conscious of the influence it exercises; otherwise, it could not be conceived as the ultimate object of devotion but only as a means to human values. In other words, the object of devotion must be personal or it could not be of supreme worth.

Conscience = God?

From these considerations, it follows, almost inevitably, that the personal God, so conceived, must be somehow the ultimate source of human life and interested in our ultimate destiny. Beyond this, however, further deductions become more and more speculative. There is nothing clearly implied in these essential ideas as to God's relation to the physical world or his power over it, nothing as to His providence in history, nothing as to any special revelation of Himself save that experienced in the constraint of conscience, which is the ultimate source of our thought and knowledge of Him. These questions may or may not be open to fruitful inquiry through the study of history and science, and particularly the history of man's religious experience

> and activity. All that is essential to the religious life in theistic faith is the concept of God's personality and love and the awareness of his constraining will that men should love one another.

ANOTHER STEP TO GO

Since Prof. Garnett leans heavily upon philosophical insinuations provided by Erich Fromm in his *Psychoanalysis and Religion,* one wonders if he will not some day arrive at Fromm's conclusion—that a "personal God" has become *emeritus.* Certainly, for students of Western philosophy and religion who have undertaken the study of Buddhism, a personal deity can be seen to have nothing to do with either conscience, immortality, or inspiration. Yet so committed are traditional Westerners to their particular notion of special historical revelation that it seems impossible for them to enter the door of philosophy more than half-way. And while they strive to bolster authority, Christian apologists are unable to be impartial, though many can be regarded as men of "good faith" and of honest intent.

CONTRAST IN BUDDHISM

Turning to a discussion of the philosophical implications of Zen Buddhism, Hubert Benoit's *The Supreme Doctrine* (1955), we note what incisive reasoning can do to the notion that self-reliance and integrity depend upon faith in God's Scripture. Dr. Benoit writes:

> The curiosity that we may feel about the paternity of a doctrine is in relation with a lack of confidence in our own intellectual intuition. If I seek a belief to which to adhere without the impression of internal evidence, without my intelligence exacting that it shall ring true, then indeed I look for private sources, for the authorities that are responsible for this doctrine. But why search thus? Such beliefs might have the most imposing origins but they will remain nevertheless, in my mind, unassimilated inclusions, not reconstituted in accordance with my structure, and in consequence useless for the accomplishment of my being. They will be spokes in the wheels of my machine.

THE SELF-RELIANT WAY TO TRUTH

Benoit continues:

> If, on the contrary, I wish to build up by degrees an authentic understanding, through intellectual nourishment which I can decompose and recompose in my own way, I shall seek everywhere without prejudice, with a complete absence of consideration for the person to whom I am listening or whose words I am reading. I am ready perhaps to find nothing in a certain famous teaching and to receive veritable reve-

lations from an obscure source. The individual man whose thought I tackle matters little; I am only interested in that which, in this thought, might awaken my own truth which is still asleep.

A claim to the paternity of any idea is absurd; it comes from the egotistical fiction of divinity which, lurking at the bottom of our psychology, pretends that we are the First Cause of the Universe. In reality the individual never creates anything; if man creates it is as universal man, anonymous, and as manifestation of the Principle. In the ages of truer wisdom artists, scholars and thinkers, did not dream of attaching their names to the works which took form through them.

The Critical Atmosphere

As predicated by H. P. Blavatsky, every searching Western student who encounters the greater depth and breadth of Eastern thought moves towards self-reliance and away from dependence upon dogma. The *Christian Century,* to which Lookout has often referred, is sometimes illustrative of this gradual transition—certainly aided by works such as those of Erich Fromm and C. J. Ducasse. A recent *Christian Century* report on an international convention, sponsored by the National Council of Churches, indicates a greater sophistication in regard to oversimplified doctrine. Edward F. Owen, Jr., reporting from the scene of the "Convention of Christian Men," in Cleveland, may be taken to fairly represent the editorial perspective of the *Century.* He summarizes with the remark that "in evaluating the total impact of the convention, . . . these things must be taken into consideration. By whom will the delegates be most influenced? How deep is their inspiration? Will they go home to witness to the deep Christian convictions which leap over doctrinal boundaries to find concrete expression in interdenominational cooperation? The final test is not how much excitement can be stirred up in Cleveland but what happens in local churches during the coming months."

Much Activity—How Much Thought?

Edward Owen may be "for God," but he is clearly not for sentimentalism or emotionalism. The interdenominational aspect of the Cleveland Convention is indeed praiseworthy, but, as Owen asks, "to what does it lead?":

Enthusiasm was expressed by thunderous group singing during sessions, by lengthy discussions held over the luncheon table or in hotel lobbies late at night, and by the low rate of absenteeism at all sessions in spite of a rigorous 12-hour schedule and the fact that the

Yankees were in town. Even some cab drivers caught the contagion and talked religion rather than baseball or the state of the weather.

The theme of the convention, "Ye shall be my witnesses," was blazoned in silver against the deep blue backdrop of the auditorium stage. It was the belief of individual delegates, the convention leaders, and the working press that the conventioneers *were* witnessing and would continue to witness. But through it all ran the question, Witness to what?

Was it to the simple, sincere Christian faith held by the average delegate? Was it to the "positive thinking" of Norman Vincent Peale, or to the high-pressure revivalism of Billy Graham, or to the religion of which H. Roe Bartle said, "The great free enterprise system! There are some who say 'Pay no attention to it,' but when my Lord walked the earth he taught it."

Too Much "Emotional Pitch"

The "big names" in religion today are still trying to "sell" something, resorting to the flashy techniques of modern advertising. Mr. Owen continues:

Emotion ran high. I heard the sessions characterized as a high-pressure sales convention and as a fundamentalist camp meeting.

The tone of the convention was set Friday night by Norman Vincent Peale. He shouted to his audience to "Pray big! Believe big! Act big and you'll get big results!"

The emotional pitch was carried on the next day by Mayor Bartle and achieved its climax Saturday night when Billy Graham spoke before 7,000 people at a meeting open to the public. J. Clinton Hawkins, president of United Church Men, introduced Graham as the man "who walks like Jesus walked, talks like Jesus talked, and lives like Jesus lived."

Billy Graham, somberly garbed in navy-blue suit and dark tie, alternately pounded the Bible in his left hand and fixed members of his audience with a prodding forefinger. He declared: "God has set me at the gate of the Kingdom to say two words: Enter in! Enter in! Enter In!" Sin, he said, is recompensed on the installment plan: "You pay for it from now on through eternity."

The Inward Turning

The essence of man's natural religion, as another contemporary writer on Zen Buddhism remarks, strikes a different note altogether—consisting of the "necessary detachment, of his liberation, the inward turning and the intensification of life until full presence of mind is

reached." A concluding paragraph for this brief survey is furnished by a much discussed evaluation of contemporary man, called *The Outsider,* by Colin Wilson. Wilson's last chapter makes good use of a critique penned by Bernard Shaw, who wrote in his Preface to *Back to Methuselah*:

> Let the churches ask themselves why there is no revolt against the dogmas of mathematics though there is one against the dogmas of religion. It is not that the mathematical dogmas are more comprehensible. The law of inverse squares is as incomprehensible to the common man as the Athanasian Creed. It is not that science is free from witchcraft, legends, miracles, biographic boosting of quacks as heroes and saints, and of barren scoundrels as explorers and discoverers. On the contrary, the iconography and hagiology of science are as copious as they are mostly squalid. But no student of science has yet been taught that specific gravity consists in the belief that Archimedes jumped out of his bath and ran naked through the streets of Syracuse shouting Eureka, or that the Law of Inverse Squares must be discarded if anyone can prove that Newton was never in an orchard in his life. . . . In mathematics and physics, the faith is still kept pure, and you may take the law and leave the legends without a suspicion of heresy.

How to Reconstitute the Religious Attitude

Mr. Wilson concludes his provocative discussion—though one unfortunately leaning towards Reinhold Niebuhr's "new" original-sin thesis—with an excellent paragraph:

> If a "new religious age" is to be born before our civilization destroys itself, it may require an intellectual effort of gestation that will involve the whole civilized world. The problem for the "civilization" is the adoption of a religious attitude that can be assimilated as *objectively* as the headlines of last Sunday's newspapers. But the problem for the individual always will be the opposite of this, the conscious striving *not* to limit the amount of experience seen and touched; the intolerable struggle to expose the sensitive areas of being to what may possibly hurt them; the attempt to see as a whole, although the instinct of self-preservation fights against the pain of the internal widening, and all the impulses of spiritual laziness built into waves of sleep with every new effort. The individual begins that long effort as an Outsider; he may finish it as a saint.

To "finish as a saint" is clearly not an easy matter—never an imitation of the saintly, but instead a devotion to disciplined philosophy and the accomplishment of egoic self-reliance. Perhaps, in varying degrees,

those who talk and speak of religion are becoming increasingly aware of this theosophical "first principle."

THE PLAN OF SATIS PRASAD

The *Congressional Record—Appendix,* Feb. 9, reports remarks made by the Hon. Lawrence H. Smith, of Wisconsin, before the House of Representatives, recommending a study of a Hindu priest's suggestions regarding the reconstitution of Christian attitudes. Rep. Smith notes an editorial by Norman Cousins in the *Saturday Review* for Jan. 14, which the congressman calls "a challenge to every Christian." The *Appendix* then quotes the entire *SR* editorial in which Mr. Cousins writes of meeting a Hindu priest, Satis Prasad, in the hills below Jakarta, Indonesia. Satis Prasad, it appeared, desired to come to the United States as a "missionary," and asked Mr. Cousins if he thought the Americans might view the idea favorably, even to the extent of supporting his mission.

When Mr. Cousins asked Satis Prasad if he "would like to convert Americans to the Hindu religion," Satis Prasad replied:

> No. I would like to convert them to the Christian religion: You see, there are no basic differences in the moral substance of Hinduism and Christianity. Historically and theologically, of course, each has its own distinct character. But in the moral teachings they have far more in common than most people realize. I would like to concentrate on making Americans aware of the need to believe in these moral teachings, by whatever name they go. The important thing is not what I call it but the teachings themselves.

ECLECTIC MORAL TEACHINGS

"I asked Prasad several questions," said Mr. Cousins. "First, exactly what moral teachings did he have in mind that both Hinduism and Christianity had in common. Secondly, why did he feel the American people were in particular need of this kind of missionary work." Mr. Cousins then discovered that Satis Prasad felt it a "great pity that the Americans know so little about the religions of other peoples," and that Satis Prasad would like to help correct that deficiency—"for it is un-Christian not to understand one's neighbors."

SIMILARITY OF CHRISTIAN AND HINDU MORAL CODES

According to Mr. Cousins, Satis Prasad then "produced a card on which in parallel columns he had written out in longhand, passages

from the Old and New Testaments to correspond with similar passages from the Mahabharata, the epic poem of the Hindu religion," on such subjects as the Golden Rule, Evil and Righteousness, etc.

Similarity of Christian and Hindu Codes

> This is the sum of all true righteousness—Treat others as thou wouldst thyself be treated. (Mahabharata.)
>
> Whatever you do not wish your neighbor to do to you do not unto him. (Old Testament.)
>
> Whatsoever ye would that men do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets. (St. Matthew.)
>
> A man obtains a proper rule of action by looking on his neighbor as himself. (Mahabharata.)
>
> Thou shalt love try neighbor as thyself. (St. Matthew.)
>
> Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again. (St. Luke.)
>
> High-minded men delight in doing good; without a thought of their own interest; when they confer a benefit on others they reckon not on favors in return. (Mahabharata.)
>
> Overcome evil with good. (St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans.)
>
> Overcome the evil man by goodness. (Mahabharata.)
>
> Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil-doers. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. (Old Testament.)
>
> Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (St. Matthew.)
>
> Then, in a religion bright with golden luster—Center of light and immortality—the righteous after death shall dwell in bliss. (Mahabharata.)

Religious Inconsistency of Americans

Two points strike us as being particularly interesting: this article was read on the floor of the House and later printed in the Congressional Record; and it is an *orthodox* Hindu priest who has this burning desire to "preach" Christianity to Christians! Satis Prasad explains:

> The people of your country may claim they believe in Christianity but from what I read at this distance, Christianity is more a custom than anything else. Your very way of life, your whole economy, your foreign policy, your values—surely you must see the great inconsistency between them and the teachings of Jesus. Christianity is a religion of humility, of renunciation, of sacrifice, of moral purity. It is not a power doctrine for a nation or an individual. Yet even as you flout Christ's will, you call yourselves Christians. My mission will be to

get you to realize what you have to do before you have a right to use the term.

AMERICA'S CRIME

I say this not in anger. America has given much to the world and can give more still. But in recent years you have lost much strength in direct proportion as you have departed from the literal acceptance of the doctrines you profess to follow. I can think of no country in history that weakened itself more than America did when it dropped two atomic bombs on living creatures. Please do not stop me by saying that there can be no religion in warfare. When you kill without meaning, you go beyond war.

Atomic energy transcended warfare and was the beginning of a new age on earth. You had sole possession of the bomb. Your leaders knew the end of the war was at hand. They did not tell the truth when they claimed they were trying to save the thousands of lives that an invasion would cost. All the documents which have come out since the war have proved that your leaders knew the atom bomb was not necessary to win the war. Yet they used it not once but twice. If there was an excuse for the first bomb, what excuse do you give for the second a few days later?

"WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE US DO?"

I would ask in good conscience and in good faith that you first of all come to terms with yourselves. I would ask that you cease justifying your inconsistencies by saying, "Christianity is an aspiration and we are moving toward it." I would ask that you not take refuge in this argument. It is a trick of reasoning and is meaningless. I would ask that you either accept the teachings of Jesus in your everyday lives and in your affairs as a nation or stop invoking His name as sanction for everything you do. . . .

America has much to offer the world. But it will continue to weaken itself unless it throws off its assumptions of superiority and thinks in terms of mutuality.

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